<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

Please cancel claim 4 without prejudice.

Please amend claim 1 and add new claims 25-33 as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for managing configuration data, the method comprising the steps of:

storing, <u>into a computer system,</u> a plurality of configuration values in a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein the plurality of nodes includes at least one inner node and at least one child node that is associated with the inner node, wherein at least one configuration value is stored in each node of the plurality of nodes, and each of the configuration values dictates how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves and interacts with other application components, <u>wherein an application component is an entity that is defined, in part, by the at least one configuration value,</u> and wherein some of the nodes store a set of configuration values while other of the nodes store a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component;

registering, <u>by the computer system,</u> at least one application component directly with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component, wherein the at least one node comprises at least one configuration value that dictates how the application component at least one of behaves with and interacts with other application components, <u>and wherein the at least one application component is an entity that is defined, in part, by the at least one configuration value</u>; and

directly notifying, <u>by the computer system,</u> the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with stored in the at least one node is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query, <u>wherein the notification comprises at least the configuration value that has been modified.</u>

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one query depends on at least one of a location of a configuration value in the tree and a data type of a configuration value.

3-4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a node further includes a reference to at least one node.

6.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the notifying step comprises:

    modifying at least one configuration value that is associated with the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered;

    storing in the hierarchical tree the configuration value that was modified, the configuration value being stored at the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered; and

    directly notifying the at least one application component that the configuration value was modified.

7.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of directly supplying the configuration value that was modified to the at least one application component.

8.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of directly supplying at least one of the configuration values stored in the hierarchical tree to the at least one application component.

9-20.   (Canceled)

21.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of configuration values in the hierarchical tree includes all of the configuration data values that are required by the at least one application component.

22.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein registering at least one application component further comprises:

directly registering the at least one application component directly with the at least one inner node.

23.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein directly notifying the at least one application component further comprises,

directly notifying the at least one application component when at least one configuration value associated with at least one of the inner node and the child node associated with the inner node is modified, based on an addition or change in the at least one configuration value.

24.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one configuration value in the plurality of configuration values that is associated with a first application component overlaps with another configuration value in the plurality of configuration values that is associated with a second application component, wherein the at least one configuration value and the another configuration value are nested under a common sub-tree in the tree.

25.   (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing at least one other configuration value in the at least one node after the at least one application component has been directly registered with at least one of the nodes,

wherein directly notifying the at least one application component further comprises directly notifying the at least one application component when both the at least one configuration value and the at least one other configuration value are modified.

26.   (New) A computer program product for managing configuration data, the computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of configuration values in a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes comprising at least one inner node and at least one child node associated with the inner node, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein each node is associated with at least one of the configuration values, and each of the configuration values dictates how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves and interacts with other application components, wherein an application component is an entity that is defined, in part, by the at least one configuration value, and wherein some of the nodes are only associated with a set of configuration values while other of the nodes are associated with a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component;

registering at least one application component directly with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component components; and

directly notifying the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with the at least one node is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query, wherein the notification comprises at least the configuration value that has been modified.

27.   (New) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the at least one query depends on at least one of a location of a configuration value in the tree and a data type of a configuration value.

28.   (New) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein a node further includes a reference to at least one node.

29.   (New) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the notifying step comprises:

modifying at least one configuration value that is associated with the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered;

storing in the hierarchical tree the configuration value that was modified, the configuration value being stored at the at least one node with which the at least one application component is registered; and

notifying the at least one application component that the configuration value was modified.

30.   (New) The computer program product of claim 29, wherein the method further comprises the step of supplying the configuration value that was modified to the at least one application component.

31.   (New) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the method further comprises the step of supplying at least one of the configuration values stored in the hierarchical tree to the at least one application component.

32.   (New)   A computer system for managing configuration data, the computer system comprising:

an organization module for organizing a plurality of configuration values into a hierarchical tree having a plurality of nodes comprising at least one inner node and at least one child node associated with the inner node, a defined structure, and defined data types for the stored configuration values, wherein each node is associated with at least one of the configuration values, and wherein some of the nodes are only associated with a set of configuration values while other of the nodes are associated with a combination of a set of configuration values and an identifier associated with at least one application component, wherein an application component is an entity that is defined, in part, by the at least one configuration value;

a storage medium for storing the plurality of configuration values in the hierarchical tree, each of the configuration values dictating how an application component associated with that configuration value at least one of behaves and interacts with other application components;

a registration module for registering at least one application component directly with at least one of the nodes of the tree, based on at least one query received from the at least one application component; and

a notification module for directly notifying the at least one application component when a configuration value associated with the at least one node is modified, based on an addition or change in at least one configuration value that matches the at least one query, wherein to directly notify the at least one application component the notification module sends at least the configuration value that has been modified directly to the at least one application component.

33.   (New)   The computer system of claim 32, wherein the storage medium stores at least one other configuration value in the at least one node that after the at least one application component has been directly registered with the at least one node, and wherein the directly notifying further comprise directly notifying the at least one application component when both the at least one configuration value and the at least one other configuration value are modified.